

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-25 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2370

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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SUBJ: TUNISIAN-ISRAELI DIALOGUE

SUMMARY: PAGES OF LEFTIST WEEKLY NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR HAVE RECENTLY BEEN SCENE OF INTERESTING EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROSPECTS BETWEEN TUNISIAN PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA AND ISRAELI FONMIN EBAN. IN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH BOURGUIBA PUBLISHED JULY 31, BOURGUIBA REITERATED HIS CONCERN FOR MIDDLE EAST PEACE AND HIS CRITICISM OF JORANDIAN STATE. IN FOLLOWING AUGUST 6 ISSUE, EBAN REPLIED TO BOURGUIBA STRESSING ISRAELI DESIRE FOR NEGOTIATIONS ON BASIS OF UNSC RESOLUTION 242. END SUMMARY.

1. BOURGUIBA IN HIS INTERVIEW WITH NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR STATED THAT HE BELIEVED POSSIBILITIES FOR SETTLEMENT, WHILE NEVER MORE FAVORABLE, WERE ALSO FULL OF DANGERS. IN RECENT CONVERSATION WITH EGYPTIAN FOREIGN MINISTER, BOURGUIBA SAID HE FELT THAT EGYPT WAS ON THRESHOLD OF DRAMATIC
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DECISION. EVEN THOUGH IT MIGHT BE TEMPTED TO SIGN PEACE BASED ON

RECOGNITION OF ISRAEL AND DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS, SUCH A PEACE WOULD NOT BE PEACE IN ANYONE'S INTERESTS. REAL SECURITY FOR ISRAEL NOT MILITARY BUT POLITICAL, AND COULD NOT BE ACHIEVED BY SUPPLEMENTARY HUMILIATION IMPOSED ON ARABS BY ISRAELIS.

2. WHEN ASKED ABOUT HIS OFFER OF DIALOGUE WITH ISRAEL, BOURGUIBA REPLIED THAT HE "REMAINED WILLING" TO MEET ISRAELIS BUT NOT FOR A "GAME OF CARDS." IT WAS ESSENTIAL THAT THERE BE USEFUL THINGS TO SAY TO EACH OTHER. BOURGUIBA SAID HE ASKING ISRAELIS TO RECOGNIZE PRIMACY OF LAW OVER FORCE AND TO RENOUNCE RIGHT TO CONQUEST. IF DISCUSSION BEGIN WITH THEM ON BASIS OF CURRENT SITUATION, THEY WOULD HAVE WON AND HAVE GAINED WHAT THEY WANT. BOURGUIBA CONCLUDED BY NOTING THAT ARABS AND EVEN PALESTINIANS HAD AGREED TO LET BOURGUIBA DO WHAT HE COULD.

3. EBAN'S REPLY (TEXT BEING POUCHED) WHICH APPEARED IN AUGUST 6 EDITION, BEGAN BY AGREEING THAT PRESENT WAS A PARTICULARLY FAVORABLE MOMENT TO BEGIN NEGOTIATIONS. TUNISIA, THOUGH A EUROPEAN GOVERNMENT, HAD INFORMED ISRAEL THAT IT WAS WILLING TO OPEN DIALOGUE WITH ISRAEL ON BASIS OF UN RECOMMENDATIONS OF 1947. ISRAEL HAD REPLIED THAT CURRENT INTERNATIONAL POSITION IS BASED ON RESOLUTION 242 AND THAT DISCUSSIONS SHOULD BE OPENED ON THAT BASIS. BOURGUIBA HAD NOT REPLIED. IT IS "TOTALLY UNREALISTIC" EBAN SAID TO MAKE 1947 BASIS OF DISCUSSION WHICH WOULD IMPLY UPROOTING OF THOUSANDS OF ISRAELIS. ISRAEL WISHED TO MAKE PEACE "BUT ON THE BASIS OF TERRITORIAL CHANGES VITAL FOR ITS SECURITY WITHOUT, HOWEVER DEMANDING ALL OF SINAI OR OF CISJORDAN." ISRAEL WOULD BE FLEXIBLE ON TERRITORIAL POINT BUT WOULD BE VERY OBSTINATE" IN KEEPING "CONTROL" OF SHARM EL SHEIKH. EBAN URGED ARABS TO BE MORE EMPIRICAL AND LESS JURIDICAL. WHAT ISRAEL WAS PROPOSING WAS NOT INCOMPATIBLE WITH THEIR HONOR. ARABS HAVE NOTHING TO LOSE IN BEGINNING DIALOGUE AND MUCH TO GAIN, FOR AT NEGOTIATING TABLE "ONE" (I.E. ISRAEL) WOULD BE LESS INTRANSIGENT THAN IN DECLARATIONS DESTINED FOR PUBLIC OPINION.

4. ON QUESTION OF FRONTIERS, HE SAID THAT IN ANY PEACE NEGOTIATIONS HE WOULD ASK ARAB REPRESENTATIVES NOT ONLY WHERE THE FRONTIERS WOULD BE BUT WHAT KIND OF FRONTIERS THEY WOULD BE. WOULD ISRAEL BE SHUT UP IN A GHETTO OR WOULD FRONTIERS BE OPEN IN BOTH DIRECTIONS TO FACILITATE FREE COMMUNICATION. IN THE LATTER CASE, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ISRAEL POSITION WOULD BE MORE FLEXIBLE THAN IN FORMER.

5. WHEN ASKED ABOUT ISRAEL'S REFUSAL TO HOLD DISCUSSIONS WITH YASSER ARAFAT OR OTHER PALESTINIANS, EBAN SAID THAT SITUATION COMPLETELY DIFFERENT FROM OFT-CITED PARALLEL BETWEEN FRENCH AND ALGERIAN FLN. PALESTINIANS WERE DEMANDING END TO ISRAEL'S EXISTENCE. EBAN ADDED SOMEWHAT PROVOCATIVELY, IN VIEW OF LEFTIST VIEWS OF NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR, THAT HE FEARED PRO-PALESTINIANS

SENTIMENT AMONG EUROPEAN LEFTISTS WAS REALLY EVIDENCE OF UNDERLYING ANTI-SEMITISM.

6. FINALLY WHEN ASKED WHETHER ISRAEL-PALESTINIAN NEGOTIATIONS POSSIBLE WITHOUT JORDAN, EBAN REPLIED THAT JORDAN DID NOT EQUAL PALESTINE, BUT EQUALLY ONE COULD NOT SEPARATE ONE FROM OTHER. PALESTINIANS WOULD HAVE CAPITAL ROLE TO PLAY IN ANY ISRAEL-JORDAN NEGOTIATIONS AS MEMBERS OF JORDANIAN DELEGATION. BOURGUIBA, EBAN NOTED, HAD NOT CLARIFIED PROBLEM BY STATING THAT JORDAN WAS AN ARTIFICIAL STATE. A STATE WHICH HAS EXISTED FOR 50 YEARS IS NOT ARTIFICIAL. COUNTRIES OF EUROPE AND ASIA HAD KNOWN HOW TO MAKE PEACE NOT BECAUSE THEY DECIDED TO LIQUIDATE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN NATIONS AND EXISTING REGIMES, BUT BECAUSE THEY HAD DECIDED TO LIVE WITH THESE DIFFERENCES IN ORDER TO AVOID CONFRONTATION AND CREATE BASIS OF COOPERATION.

DECONTROL 12/31/74.
STONE

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED USINT CAIRO.

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